

NSC BRIEFING

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7 DECEMBER 1955

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POSSIBLE CENTRAL AMERICAN REVOLTS

I. After a year in Latin America which started with an abortive "revolution" in Costa Rica, and included a successful one in Argentina and an elaborate coup "to prevent a coup" in Brazil, we're back where we started, with mounting number of reports that:

A. Costa Rica is about to be attacked again--primarily by "revolutionaries" plotting in Venezuela, and that:

B. Overthrow of Somoza regime in Nicaragua in near future, perhaps with complicity or unwitting aid of Costa Rica, Honduras and even El Salvador, being plotted by Nicaraguan residents and exiles.

II. Enemies of Nicaraguan strong-man Somoza--whose political spectrum runs from Conservative to Communist--include many so bitter they would stop at nothing to eliminate him.

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A. Depth of anti-Somoza feeling can be measured by fact that Nicaraguan Conservatives do not hesitate to make their views and hopes known to US Embassy Managua, have even gone so far as to tell State Department officials in Washington, in general way, of their revolutionary plans.

B. Latest reports imply that, while anti-Somoza elements so far unable reach over-all agreement on plans, some kind of blow against his regime (perhaps triggered by attempt on Somoza's life) increasingly likely.

C. Somoza has told US Ambassador Whelan he expects imminent revolutionary attempt, sparked by invasions from outside Nicaragua, but is confident he can defeat it. He also stated his fears of an assassination attempt.

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Meanwhile, the Government of Costa Rica has told us of alleged preparations in Venezuela for a "revolutionary" attack on Costa Rica similar to ill-fated attempt of Jan '55.

- A. Costa Rican Government takes reports seriously; is already digging earthworks, making other preparations to resist attacks on government installations in capital city of San Jose.
- B. In contrast to Jan '55 affair, reports thusfar do not involve Nicaragua in plotting against Costa Rica, although Somosa shares with Venezuelan President Perez Jimenez a reputation as Hemisphere's most implacable enemy of Costa Rican President Figueres.
- With regard to both possible actions, we take view that:

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A. An attempted revolt in Nicaragua is probable sometime before Nov '56 elections, but--unless the National Guard changes its present loyalties-- it is not likely to succeed.

B. While Somoza and Perez may well be conspiring to overthrow the Costa Rican regime of Figueres, we believe such an attempt would probably be unsuccessful, and that the OAS probably could and would intervene as promptly and effectively as was case in Jan '55.

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